

LIBRARIANS' COMPETENCIES AND ORGANIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN DELTA AND EDO STATES

By

EJEDAFIRU, Efe Francis (CLN)

EMAIL: ejedafiruefe@yahoo.com, eejedafiru@delsu.edu.ng

GSM :+23480898698

and

DIGBORI, Maryann Aghogho

Department Of Library & Information Science

Delta State University, Abraka

Abstract

This study investigated librarians' competencies and organization of knowledge in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states. The research adopted the survey research design. The population of the study was 204 librarians from 22 academic libraries in Delta and Edo states respectively. The census sampling technique was used as a result of the manageable size of the population. Questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data from the respondents. Frequency counts was used to analyze the demographic information of the respondents. Statistical mean, standard deviation and Pearson product Moment Correlation Coefficient r (PPMCC) were used to answer the research questions. The study revealed that the competence level of librarians' towards cataloguing and classification of library resources in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states is high. Consequently, regular training should be conducted for librarians' on bibliographic description of library materials and current trends in cataloguing practices, librarians with vast knowledge of cataloguing should mentor the younger colleagues to boost their competences.

Key words: Librarians, Competencies, Organization, Knowledge, Libraries.

Introduction

Cataloguing and classification are gateway to information resources access and utilization and they are means of organizing library resources in order to ensure that access and retrieval of such information resources are made easy (Adiki & Omekwu 2019). Cataloguing and classification requires librarians who are intelligent, skillful, resourceful, dedicated, innovative, and keen interest in performance of routine task (David-West & Wali 2020). In another development, David-West & Angrey (2018) earlier explained that cataloguing and classification skills are major tools in information dissemination because it is an access and retrieval tool which allows people to find

information needed for their research work and personal development. These scholars noted that cataloguers must be adequately trained to carry out this task. On the other hand, classification provides a means of bringing all books on the same subject together in a place. Therefore cataloguing and classification can be described as the index to all library collections. Cataloguing and Classification make retrieval of library materials easy for users. It is one of the specialized aspects of the library operation in tertiary institutions. In addition, cataloguing has rich history of practice, which can provide valuable lessons for many of today's information workers, from metadata specialists to reference librarians. Cataloguing and classification are two important constituents of library system, if catalogue on one hand helps to provide information on physical and topical nature of documents, classification on the other hand helps to locate the documents in the huge collection of library more quickly and easily.

Competence in cataloguing and classification of library resources measure librarian's efficiency, capability and capacity, knowledge, expertise, and skills that the librarian brings to library services. The competencies of librarians in Nigerian were accessed in the study by Okoye (2013) and the study agreed that there is need for librarians to have skills based knowledge, since such knowledge will promote job efficiency in the workplace. Citing the study of Marshal (2003), he identified two types of competences which relates to knowledge in the areas of information resources, access, technology, management and research and the abilities to use these areas of knowledge to provide library and information services. The other consists of personal competencies which represent a set of skills, attitudes, and values that enable librarians to work effectively; to be good communicators; be able to focus on continuing learning throughout their career; be able to demonstrate value added nature of their contributions and survive in the new world of work. This implies that competencies imply knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

One of the aspects in which the competency of the librarian is required in library operations is skilled towards cataloguing and classification of library materials. Although, most librarians have had training, (education), in library and information science, doubt exist in most academic libraries as to whether these librarians have the skills and competencies in providing services related to cataloguing and classification of library resources. Hence, Bamidele, Omekun, Imam and Amadi (2013) sue for the training of academic librarians in order to improve their skills particularly in cataloguing and classification that will support library users in searching for information. .

Library materials are not only catalogued, they are also classified; this is because, library resources varied and these resources have to be classified in such a way that those that have similar characteristics are grouped together and by analogy keep unrelated ones apart. Librarians believe that the main objective of this activity called classification is to facilitate easy location of and access to information resources in libraries.

Webb (2007) highlighted that the effective academic library are gateways to academic knowledge through their own collection and by facilitating access to material. In the line with its core purpose, providing effective library services could support the research activities of researchers. Hence, a well designed academic library will surely encourage teaching, learning, and research. It is against

this background the study attempts to investigate librarian's competencies, and organization of knowledge in academic libraries in the study area.

Statement of the Problem

It was noted by the researchers, that in many instances, two books of the same profile are being given two different classification numbers which automatically places this same books on different shelves far away from each other. Sometimes, two or more books of same profile are given class marks which are almost the same but slightly different from each other. This anomaly causes the users to be confused and makes it possible to question the professionalism of the librarians in charge of cataloguing and classification. This finding raises questions in the mind of the researchers. Could it be that librarians are not competent enough to carry out the task due to the technicality involved? Or could it be that they are not being provided with the right tools that can sharpen their competencies? It is on the bases of these questions that the researchers are trying to examine librarians' competencies towards cataloguing and classification of library resources in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states.

General Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine librarians' competencies and organization of knowledge in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states.

The specific objectives were to:

- Ascertain the competence level of librarians in organization of knowledge in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states;
- Find out the challenges encountered in cataloguing of library resources in academic library in Delta and Edo states;

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the competence level of librarians in organization of knowledge in academic libraries in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states?
- What are the challenges encountered in cataloguing of library resources in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states?

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research method because it enabled the researcher investigate and gather data in the study. Belmont (1990) sees Survey research as a method of collecting information by asking questions. The population of this study is 204 librarians from 22 academic libraries in Delta and Edo states respectively. This figure is so adopted purposively because it gives the researcher a manageable size for the execution of the study. The Australian Bureau of Statistics

(2013) affirmed that the census sampling techniques provides a true measure of the population by eradicating sampling errors, benchmark data may be obtained for future studies via the census sampling technique and detailed information about small sub-groups within the population is more likely to be available using the sampling method.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Competence Level of Librarians in Organization of Knowledge in Academic Libraries

Competence Level of Librarians in Organization of Knowledge in Academic Libraries	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
I am able to use the cutter table in cataloguing and classification.	61	86	8	0	3.34
Every librarian is capable of utilizing the sears subject list for cataloguing and classification.	44	93	17	1	3.16
I am familiar with the use of subject heading in cataloguing and classification of materials.	60	88	4	0	3.37
Competent librarians understand the application of AACR2 in cataloguing and classification.	46	99	8	1	3.23
I can catalogue library materials using the authors approach.	54	97	3	0	3.33
Librarian approaches cataloguing using author, title, subject of resource materials.	51	101	1	0	3.33
I demonstrate expertise in C.I.P (Cataloguing in Publication).	46	95	11	0	3.23
Librarians demonstrate technical know-how relating to cataloguing.	42	102	7	1	3.22
Librarians in academic libraries demonstrate array of skills.	46	102	6	0	3.26
Competencies are required through training.	70	84	0	0	3.45
Aggregate Mean					3.29
Criterion Mean					2.50

Table 1 shows that with an aggregate mean of 3.29 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50, it can be concluded that the competence level of librarians towards cataloguing and classification of library resources in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states is high.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges encountered in cataloguing of library resources in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states?

Data in Table 2: provide answer to this question.

Challenges	Agree		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Librarians struggle with the functionality of cataloguing facilities.	112	71.8	44	28.2	156	100.0
Checking cabinet for existing material takes time.	117	75	39	25	156	100.0
Most librarians find it difficult to copy the accession number of a new book in the existing card.	96	61.5	60	38.5	156	100.0
Extraction of call number into the new book imposes librarian's task of cataloging and classification.	126	80.8	30	19.2	156	100.0
It is not easy to describe materials for cataloguing.	106	68	49	32	156	100.0
Describing materials bibliographically takes time.	115	73.7	41	26.3	156	100.0
Many librarians cannot differentiate materials written by corporate organization and materials that comes in volumes.	98	62.8	58	37.2	156	100.0
Librarian's knowledge in grouping materials according to their subjects is in doubt.	121	77.6	35	22.4	156	100.0

Table 2 shows the challenges encountered by the librarians in cataloguing of library resources. They agreed to the following as challenges-describing materials for cataloguing 126(80.8%), lack of knowledge in current trends in cataloguing practices 121(77.6%), longer time for checking cabinet for existing materials 117(75%), longer time for describing materials bibliographically 125(73.7%) and struggling with the functionality of cataloguing facilities 112(71.8%). It can be concluded that the challenges encountered by the librarians in cataloguing of library resources in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states include difficulty in describing materials for cataloguing, lack of knowledge in current trends in cataloguing practices, longer time for checking cabinet for existing materials, longer time for describing materials bibliographically and struggling with the functionality of cataloguing facilities.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges faced by librarians when classifying of library resources in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states?

Data in Table 3 provide answer to this question.

Table 3: Challenges faced by Librarians when Classifying Library Resources

Challenges	Agree		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Difficulty in getting classmark	125	80.1	31	19.9	156	100.0
Subject heading ambiguity	135	86.5	21	13.5	156	100.0
Technicality of classification	143	91.7	13	8.3	156	100.0
Difficulty in identifying the subject matter of a book	130	83.3	26	16.7	156	100.0
Time consuming	138	88.5	18	11.5	156	100.0
Lack of good knowledge of cutter tables	124	79.5	32	20.6	156	100.0
Incorrect Cataloguing in Print (CIP)	114	73.1	42	26.9	156	100.0
Librarian's knowledge in grouping materials according to their subjects is in doubt	113	72.4	43	27.6	156	100.0

Table 3 shows the challenges faced by the librarians when classifying library resources. They agreed to the following as challenges-technicality of classification 143(91.7%), time consuming 138(88.5%), subject heading ambiguity 135(86.5%), difficulty in identifying the subject matter of a book 130(83.3%) and difficulty in getting class mark 125(80.1%). It can be concluded that the challenges faced by librarians when classifying library resources in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states include technicality of classification, time consuming, and subject heading ambiguity, difficulty in identifying the subject matter of a book and difficulty in getting class mark.

Discussion of Findings

The study has shown that the competence level of librarians towards cataloguing and classification of library resources in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states is high. The findings show that the librarians are able to use the cutter table in cataloguing and classification. Every librarian is capable of utilizing the sears subject list for cataloguing and classification. The librarians are familiar with the use of subject heading in cataloguing and classification of materials, and competent librarians understand the application of AACR2 in cataloguing and classification. These findings are in agreement with the Okoye who cited Marshall (2003) that librarians demonstrate array of skills in librarianship. The findings are also in agreement with those of Cabonero and Dolendo (2013) which traced the cataloguing and classification skills of library and information science practitioners in their workplace in the Philippines and reveals that the cataloguing and classification skills of the five library and information science graduates of BSU are generally proficient in the basic areas of descriptive cataloguing, subject analysis, and classification but found greatest difficulty on subject.

Considering the challenges associated with cataloguing of library resources in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states, the study revealed that librarians struggle with the functionality of cataloguing facilities, check cabinet for existing material takes time, extract of call number into the new book imposes librarian's task of cataloguing and classification, and most librarians find it difficult to copy the accession number of a new book in the existing card. The study equally revealed that librarians face uphill tasks in describing materials for cataloguing, inadequate knowledge in current trends in cataloguing practices, and take longer time describing materials bibliographically and struggling with the functionality of cataloguing facilities. The finding agree with the study of Aina (2004) which revealed that librarians spend longer time in describing materials bibliographically and struggles with the functionality/interpretation of cataloguing rules due to the fact that librarians calls cataloguing of library resources a boring activity. The findings further agree with Shakeel and Rubina (2012) that challenges facing librarians include a clear gap between the theoretical and practical aspect of librarianship, budgetary constraints, inadequate IT infrastructure, ineffective leadership, low professional status and pay scale, poor information literacy skills and digital literacy, inadequately trained and skilled manpower, and limited library resources. The findings are also in line with Oyeronke (2013) that librarians face challenges such as inadequate physical description of some electronic resources, inadequate work flow in cataloguing sections, and copyright issues in the process of cataloguing their information resources.

The findings of this study revealed that the challenges faced by librarians in the process of classifying library resources in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states include technicality of classification, time consuming, and subject heading ambiguity, difficulty in identifying the subject matter of a book and difficulty in getting class mark. The findings are in agreement with Muhammad, Buffa and Garba (2018) which revealed that poor organization in the library causes difficulty in identifying relevant materials despite its presence in library collections. The authors mentioned some challenges such as inconsistency in subject heading, and assignment of class notation; they also mention job professionalism as a challenge in the sense that some of the librarians leave their work at the hand of para-professionals which results to lot of mistakes and no proper cross-supervision from the professionals. The findings are also in line with the proposition of Ellen (2012) that many of the classifications themselves are based on subjective judgments, which may or may not be shared by everyone participating.

Conclusion

It is glaring that librarians' have a high level of competence towards cataloguing and classification of library resources in academic libraries in Delta and Edo states universities. It is glaring that the cataloguing challenges faced by librarians' are difficulty in describing materials for cataloguing, inadequate knowledge in current trends in cataloguing practices, longer time for checking cabinet for existing materials and much more. In the same vein, the classification challenges faced by librarians are technicality of classification, time consuming, and subject heading ambiguity, difficulty in identifying the subject matter of a book and difficulty in getting class mark.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- Regular training should be conducted for librarians' on bibliographic description of library materials and current trends in cataloguing practice.
- Librarians with vast knowledge of cataloguing and classification should mentor the younger colleagues to boost their competencies.
- University library management should strive to acquire current cataloguing and classification tools to enhance the organization of knowledge in line with current reality.

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